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L. Zinkand 11-27-78



I couldn't write, I'm not a poet
So I killed me one and tried to grow it
I buried that poet just a seed
When he came up, he was a poetree

Like every tree when summer comes
There are fruits like apples, pears, and plums
Well, my poetree was really growin'
So I thought I'd go and pick a poem

I picked my best and turned it in
My teacher said, "That's sad as sin."
"A poet," he said, "you'll never be."
As he cut down my poetree

Now that I'm back where I'd begun
I'd better go kill me another one
or two or more, can't do no harm
I could always start a poetree farm.

Stan Sturing

To The Immigrant

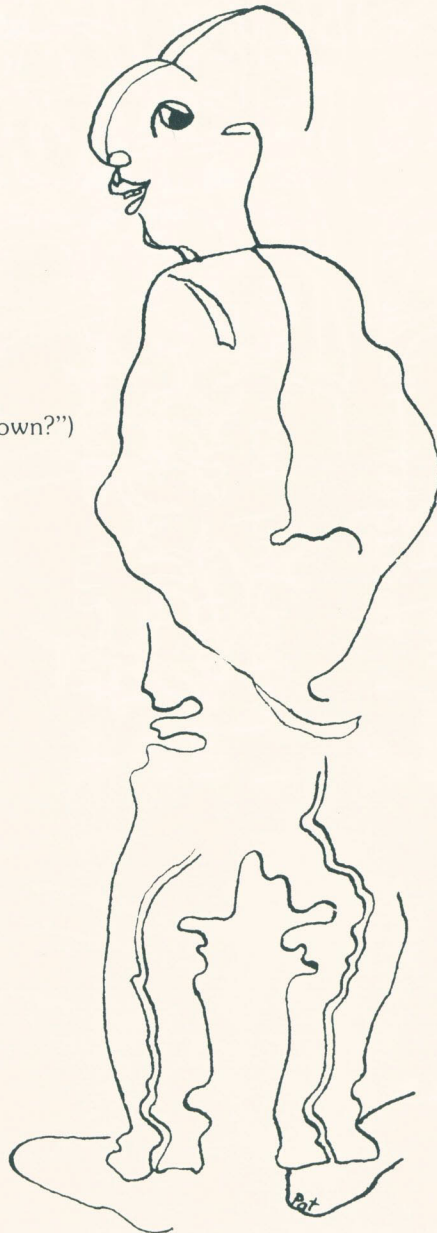
Val Zandstra

hey you
city kid
with the indulgent smile;
i know,
i wore one once
after i survived culture shock
(and Big Mac Attacks)
four years ago
sustained only
by visions:
(chain restaurants,
six-lane expressways and
infinite shopping malls.)

i too
disguised it.
("you mean there's no dry cleaners in town?")
yep.
almost everyone is Dutch,
(even the townies)
where we come from, kid,
if you're Dutch,
you go to church
(and you're almost extinct breed.)
and then, there's cowboy boots.

Let's hope they understand
we're not snobs.

we're used to
CR Cathedrals
(shades of LaGrave)
where new clothes are "in"
and Dutch psalms are not.



empty pews?
summer,
pilgrims flock to the holy land (Mich.)
father comes up weekends
to try out the new ark
launched from cottages built on sand.
winter,
patriarchs retire to florida
or fly to israel or japan
("trips to europe are so---common!")

we have our reasons.
do they know?
maybe they realize
it's loyalty (not arrogance, kid)
that makes us
brag up our respective cities.
(but air pollution
doesn't hurt your nose
like you-know-what.)

i think they understand,
and maybe
they even know
what some of us don't, kid,

that Jesus
don't really care
if we're "IN"
or
not.



Jim Schaap

It should be like an old pair of jeans, broken in long ago and now comfortable and smooth from lots of use. But in our community it is still in that stiff dark-blue stage. Strange, because the styles are changing. Skirts and high heels are coming in. Don't you think we're a bit late?

Pat Leegwater

A long time ago, like lots of younguns, I took Piano Lessons. Our family had a high black, upright Piano. It set heavy underneath the only window in the backroom. The backroom wasn't heated and I spent lots of Hours of Practice there.

Like lots of younguns, I hated Practice. Scales were the worst part. Up and down and back and forth, over those blacks and whites; one sharp, three flats, five sharps, seven flats, hands together, right hand, left hand arpeggios, please. It was hard work and frustrating, those Scales were. One day I pounded that Piano with my fists and broke three keys.

But Mom and Dad got those keys fixed and I had to keep Practicing Scales. It got to be that I even liked doing it on some especially virtuous days. I'd zoom up and down and back and forth over those blacks and whites. Mom would come in and grin; "Hey, those Scales are sounding great!" And because it was an especially virtuous day, I would grin too and say, "Yeah, its even fun. . . sometimes."

I never thought much about 'mere' scales sounding great. After all, Scales are scales. They had to be practiced in order to play "real music."

Somewhere along the line, I went to this Piano Concert and the pianist sat down at the Piano, lifted his hands and played Scales. I mean, he called them something else but I knew they were Scales. Hadn't I played them enough to know? Up and down and

back and forth, over those blacks and whites; one sharp, three flats, five sharps, seven flats, hands together, right hand, left hand, arpeggios, if you please.

So I set myself outside the Concert Hall with the pigeons and waited for the others. I guess it wasn't one of my especially virtuous days.

A long time later I thought I'd try at being an Artist. I took lots of Classes. I learned about Art and something of what makes Great Art. I did Hours of Practice. There was form, balance, color, value, and so on. . . It was hard work (except on some inspired days) and one time I took a drawing, crinkled it up and scissored it into the garbage can.

But I kept Practicing.

One day I found myself in an Art Gallery, studying a Show of Keith Davis. Stripes zipped up and down and back and forth over huge Canvases. I spent three hours examining that Show and I was almost ready to go when I heard a clumsy balding man beside me muttering to his son, "Bill, when someone calls me and says, 'Junior, I need some milk,' I don't go to the barn and pack a milking machine into a carton and send it to 'im. I don't do that, Bill. Jist wouldn't make sense. And you tell me that. . ."

I walked out the door of the Gallery. My sister was waiting with the pigeons.

Another Look At "Abstract" Art

Lugene Vanden Bosch

I suppose we've all stood in awe, gazing at one of God's most majestic and beautiful works—the sunset. How magnificent it is that God chose to give us a polychromatic world. How grateful we should be for color! As Luther said, "Our Lord made the best gifts common. The pre-eminent gift given to all is the eye."¹

When we stop to gaze at sunset or a blossoming flower, we are enjoying the aesthetic dimension of creation. Likewise, when we stop to gaze at a painting. Here too we are enjoying the aesthetic dimension of creation, for creation unfolds itself also through *man's* creations. As man creates more and

more beautiful art, God also takes delight in the unfolding of the aesthetic potentialities latent in His creation.²

Such unfolding takes place in different periods of history, in different cultures, and in different ways within a culture. This ought not disturb us. In a sense, "there is nothing new under the sun," and yet, we are able to experience many of God's *new* beautiful works *through our works* in the unfolding of art history. Throughout this history the artist has designed some of God's creation.³

Today many people seem to think the imitative, or an art work's relationship to a model should

determine its merit.⁴ The idea of imitation is not a new one, indeed; it is as old as ancient idolotrous people using visual art to represent various things for magical purposes. Where these art objects were used for religious purposes of representation the relationship to the object represented was very important in order to guarantee that the actual spirit of the man, animal, or deity was in fact there.⁵

In the Bible, however, the pattern in art was one of patterned repetition of generalized creational forms, apparently without even naturalistic coloring.⁶ These Biblical examples, much of them commanded by God Himself, seem to be quite a great distance from most theories of realism. We see in the Bible, I believe, more of an emphasis on *human expression* in art. Art in the Bible was produced by human beings who had feeling, thoughts, beliefs, and this was expressed in a *variety* of ways. The expressionistic art of the Bible was primarily an *emotional* one, although beliefs were certainly included. The means by which this art was expressed was quite often a *spontaneous* one rather than the result of careful planning and execution through craftsmanship.⁷

Today, some of us want to go through much difficulty, trying to locate the expression in a work of art. More than that, we want to find the "message" of a particular work. Upon discovering that there appears to be no message or explicit expression, we quickly dismiss the work as useless.

I'm sure we may appreciate and make works of art that are vehicles for nonaesthetic values—ethical, social, pistical, symbolic, and others; and the experience will be richer for it. *But* if we respond directly to *those* values we are not responding to the work correctly—that is, aesthetically.⁸

Although many Christian art viewers seem intent on discovering what religious position or world-and-life-view the artist has expressed, I believe, along with Barker, that we should direct ourselves, first of all, to a more art-istic concern—the aesthetic dimension—without attention to which we will experience a painting no differently than we would experience a sermon, or a term-paper.

When I paint I am hardly aware of what I am communicating. What there was to be communicated in my painting was not in existence until the painting was completed. "Communication" will not properly explain art works—neither mine nor anyone else's.

As in other areas of cultural expertise, we Christians must be led in appreciation of new forms and new ways in which the aesthetic dimension of our Father's creation unfolds itself. Usually learning comes from exposure. Few of us have a great deal of exposure to non-representational art. Generally the best way to acquire a new "taste" is to move from

the familiar to the unfamiliar through exposure.

Man has the ability to create art works—not in the way that God creates (something out of nothing), but in a way that something is created out of something. This work that man creates, Schaeffer points out, has value *because* it is the work of *man's creativity*, and creativity has value because God is the creator.⁹

Creativity, according to Barker, consists simply of all human extensions of God's creation whether by rational or by non-rational means.

Painting abstract painting is an exercise of my God-ordained dominion over the aesthetic dimension of creation. Artistic creativity and dominion, then is an attempt to uncover the pre-existent aesthetic structure of God's creation. I attempt to "release and develop previously unrealized energies and materials."¹⁰ These latent and potential materials and energies are ours to enjoy if we use a maximum amount of our God-given imagination and a minimum amount of our God-given reason while viewing or making it.

I believe that among the visual fine art styles, non-representational or "abstract" is the most purely aesthetic.

Let me point out that I am not advocating "art for art's sake." I restate Barker when I advocate art should be experienced as *art* and not as something else.¹¹

It is the aesthetic qualities of my work (and all art work) that matter most of all. But to talk of these requires that we be responsible in the area of aesthetics. It requires that we appreciate and judge the art work *as art* and not as something else. It is not with *ideas* that I paint, but with *paint* that I paint.

Of course, as in any form or style, I must work with certain creational norms—with the features intrinsic to the medium as well as certain aesthetic principles such as unity, variety, balance or imbalance positive and negative space, repetition, and other elements of design that make up a good painting. If my work is good, the viewer will focus in on the color and line, movement and space, and he will take pleasure in what he sees. If what the viewer sees happens to be an "imitation" of something other than my painting is not my concern, nor should it be the concern of the viewer. The subject of my painting is my *painting*.

My paintings are not windows into another world nor do they imitate this one. These paintings which look like paint on canvas are simply that—paint on canvas—and they mean only that—paint on canvas. To look for anything else may be an interesting psychological exercise but unless we allow ourselves the pleasure of perceptual contemplation, the same perceptual contemplation we are willing to give a sunset, or a budding flower, or

the spaces between the leaves of a tree, we close ourselves off from some of the diversity that is available for our aesthetic delight.

In abstract painting, I am interested in color and line, and space and want to handle them for their own sake, and in their relation to the overall form. I let myself be as free as possible from the associations and limitations of representation. My art is not a message for the intellect. It is not a term-paper. If the viewer is alienated and feels separated from me, it is only an intellectual separation. We can still enjoy the aesthetic qualities of my work together—if we allow ourselves to simply enjoy the abstract qualities of the work in the same way in which we enjoy the abstract qualities of a sunset.

Abstract art is certainly not “immoral” or “anti-Christian” even though the intellectual or “message” dimension is missing. The notion that there should be some sort of identifiably “Christian art” is quite mistaken I believe. Jacques Maritain asserts that there is indeed a “Christian art,” and it is “the art of redeemed humanity. . . . Everything belongs to it. . . . It is at home wherever the ingenuity and the joy of man extend. . . . If you want to make a Christian work, then be Christian, and simply try to make *beautiful work*, into which your heart will pass; do not try to ‘make Christian’”¹²

My work then, is not “*explicitly*” “Christian” although I do believe it is the expression of an artist living in the twentieth-century and very much a product of his age, seeking to live and work from a Christian world-and-life-view. So, my motif is determined not only by the convictions which have gripped me but also the cultural pattern in which I live. Because I am a product of my age, I must use the forms and styles available to me today.

I believe that my art should be twentieth-century art. Schaeffer tells us, “. . . if a Christian’s art is not twentieth-century art, it is an obstacle to his being heard. It makes him different in a way in which there is no necessity for difference. A Christian should not, therefore, strive to copy Rembrandt. . . .”¹³

I believe, correctly seen, my work can show the

glory of God. Through its colors, shapes, lines, use of space, and the relationship of each and other elements to each other, God’s creation continues to unfold itself. My work is made simply for play and delight. I acknowledge the abundance of grace that redeems my artistic activity. This aesthetic activity is one of my joyous responsibilities. . . on this side as well as on the other side of creation. . . when we’ll see it all, coloring the skys with our eyes.

1. Martin Luther, *Table Talk*, ed. and translated. Theodore G. Tappert, in *Luther’s Works*, LIV, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 175 (no. 2849b).

2. Barker, Nicolas P. “A Christian Position on Aesthetics and the Fine Arts,” Unpublished Paper, Covenant College, Spring 1978.

3. Ibid.

4. It might be well to define a “work of art.” According to Barker, a “work of art” is “anything man-made that, regardless of its producer’s intentions, deserves attention directed primarily in its aesthetic dimension, for it is an instance of the creative unfolding of the aesthetic dimension of creation.” (Barker)

Dr. Calvin Seerveld defines *art* as the “symbolical objectification of certain meaning aspects of a thing, subject to the law of coherence.” (Seerveld, *A Christian Critique of Art*, p. 39)

Prof. N. Van Til replaces the word “reality” for “thing” as the use of the word thing “generally does not include the more abstract ideas a work may want to symbolize.” (Van Til, Syllabus for his Aesthetics class)

5. Van Til, Nicolas. Syllabus for Aesthetics. (Dordt College, Fall, 1978)

6. Barker.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

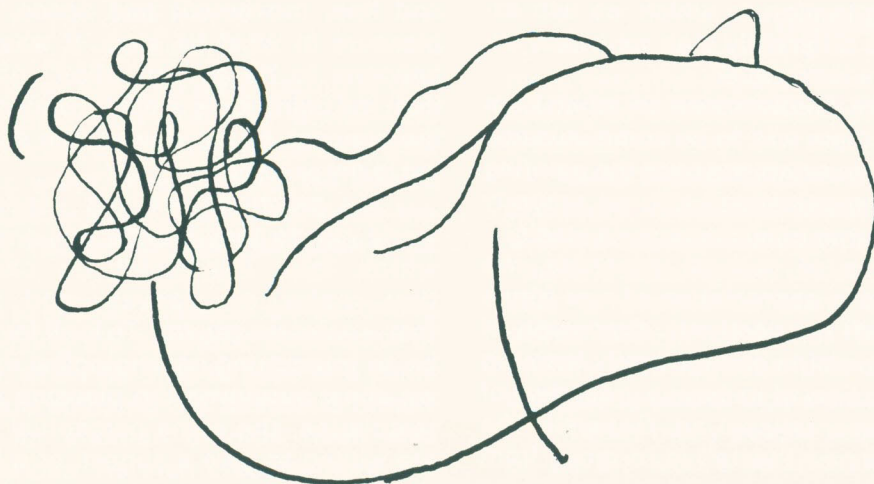
9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Schaeffer, Francis A. *Art and the Bible: Two Essays*. (InterVarsity Press, 1973) p. 33.

12. Maritain, Jacques. *Art and Scholasticism*, (Scibners, 1962) p. 65. quoted by Virginia Stem Owens. “Good Works: The Aesthetic of Jacques Maritain,” *Christianity Today*, Oct. 6, 1978. (Underlining mine)

13. Schaeffer, p. 51.



An abstract line drawing in black ink on a light background. It depicts a face in profile, looking towards the left. The features are defined by simple, flowing lines: a large, rounded eye, a prominent nose, and a mouth with a scalloped, tooth-like edge. The neck and upper torso are suggested by a few more lines, leading to a large, irregular shape on the right side of the page that resembles a shoulder or a piece of clothing. The overall style is minimalist and expressive.

Death of Sirocco

I cannot mourn for you in the city
the ambulance wailing, the jets
crowding to come in, the hospital
corridor smelling of disinfectant

Last night a wolf howled
Owls perched outside on naked trees
and hooted the death knell

They have scattered your ashes
Your wife and children have collected
their tears in glass bowls
and are afraid to pour them out

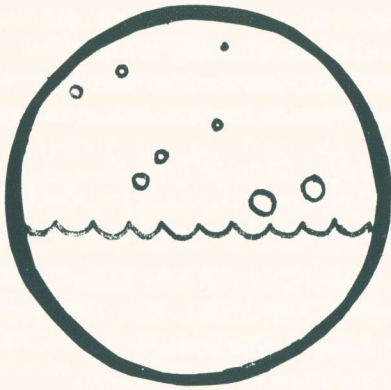
A night wind has come
to soothe the bushes
that hug the ground

And the planet has spread out it's
arms to greet you. Your atoms are
absorbed into the gleam of
this October's first dew

It is more than just air
rising silently, swiftly
guided on invisible wings

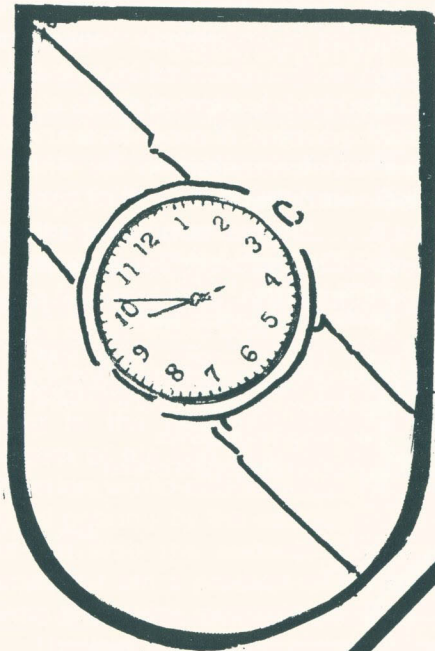
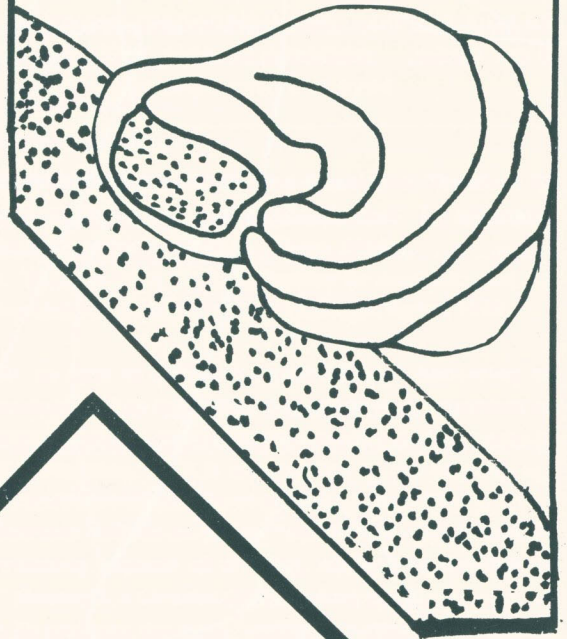
One tree stretches a limb over the water
it is more than satisfied, it is obedient
It has scattered out leaves
laid to rest on the river's breast

Judy Van Gorp



A shell
on the beach,
was empty,
yet it uttered
the sound of the sea
Every sinner
apart from God
has an ocean
roaring
in his open mouth.

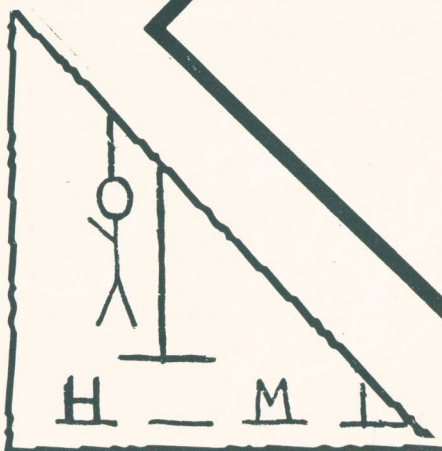
Norman Prenger



The Clock

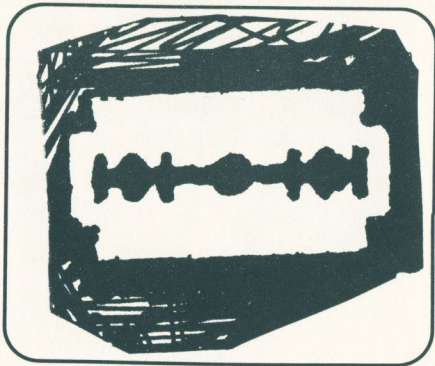
The Old town clock it sits and chimes
While all the people pay no mind,
But when I pass that way each day
I listen and shout what time you say,
For they all look upon their arm,
While I must listen for the charm,
Of that old clock which always chimes,
For me to hear for I am blind.

Brian Weaver



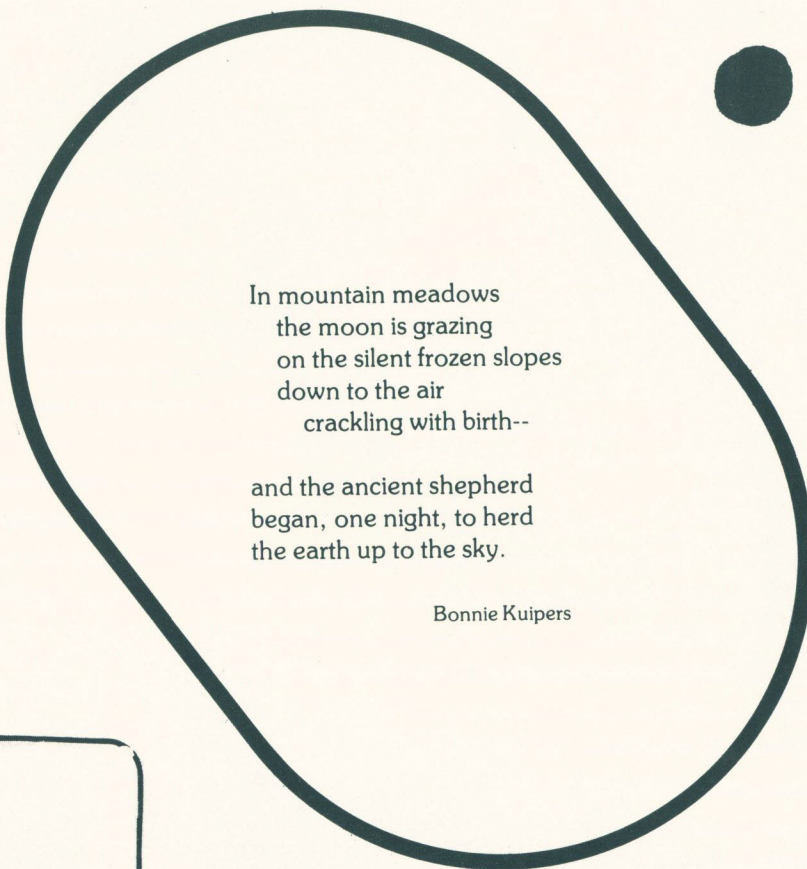
The best I can do
Is feel sorry for myself
The worst I can do
Is think I'm justified.

Norman Prenger



When ever
A child is born
the Heavens stand
in complete awe
While the earth wants
the proper forms filled.

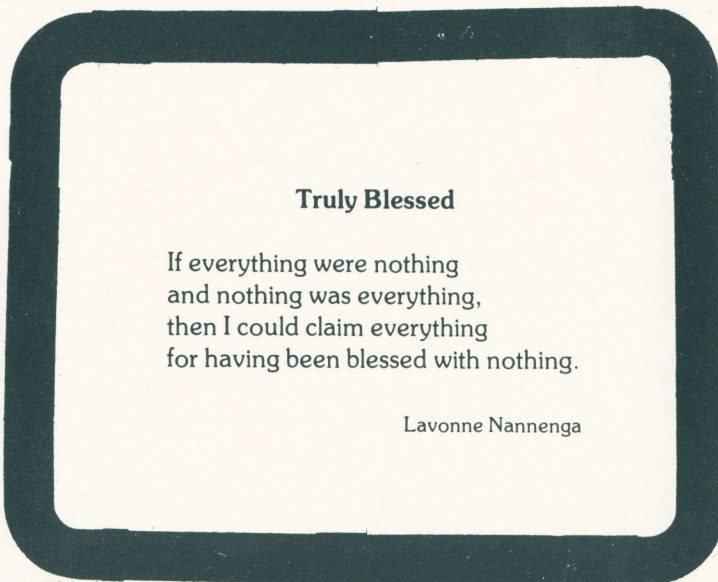
Norman Prenger



In mountain meadows
the moon is grazing
on the silent frozen slopes
down to the air
crackling with birth--

and the ancient shepherd
began, one night, to herd
the earth up to the sky.

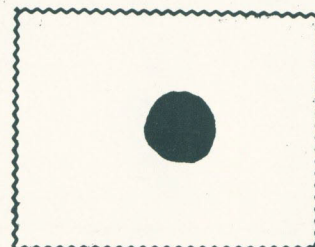
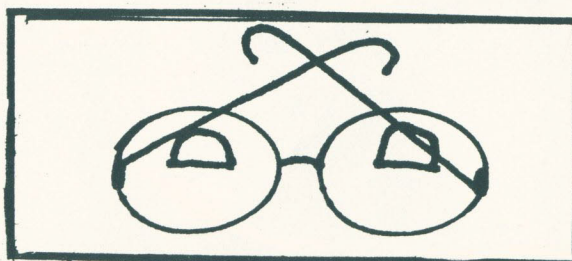
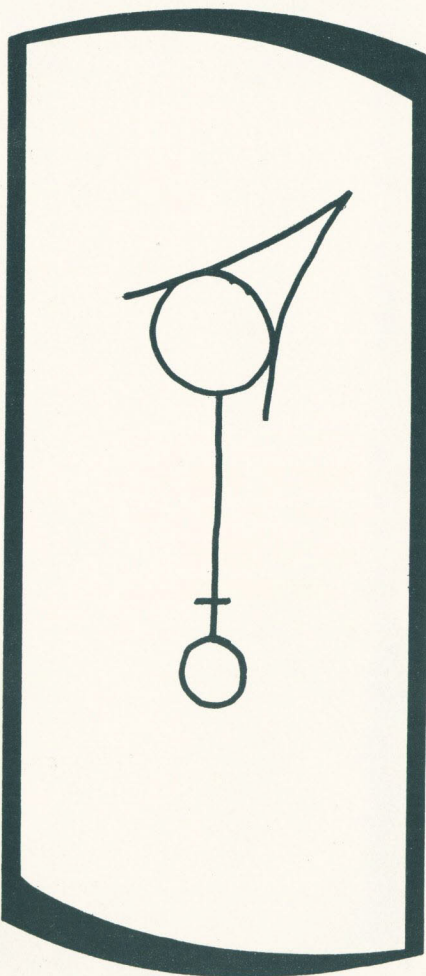
Bonnie Kuipers



Truly Blessed

If everything were nothing
and nothing was everything,
then I could claim everything
for having been blessed with nothing.

Lavonne Nannenga



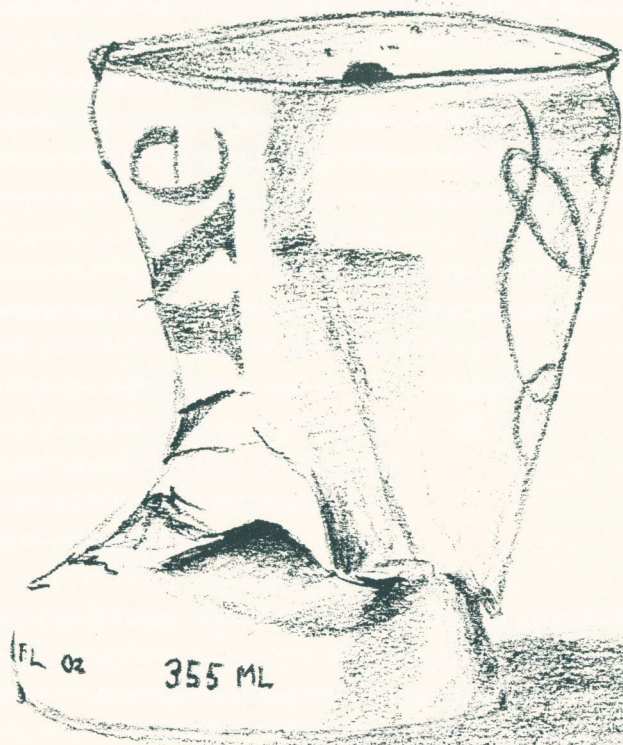
“The Bird”
Mark Vogelzang



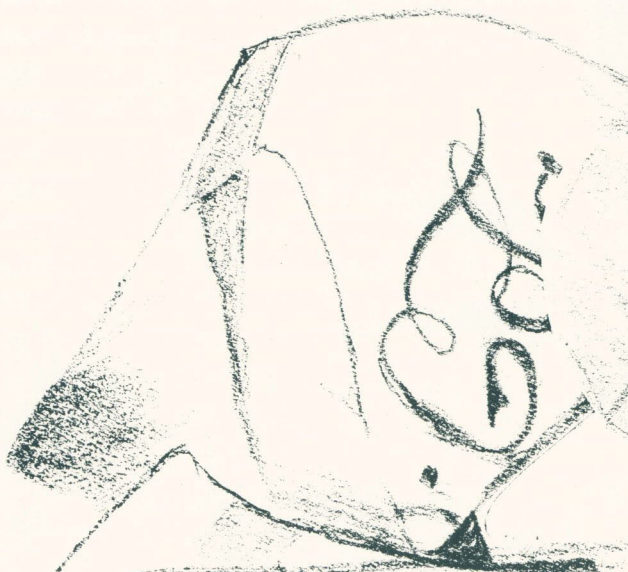
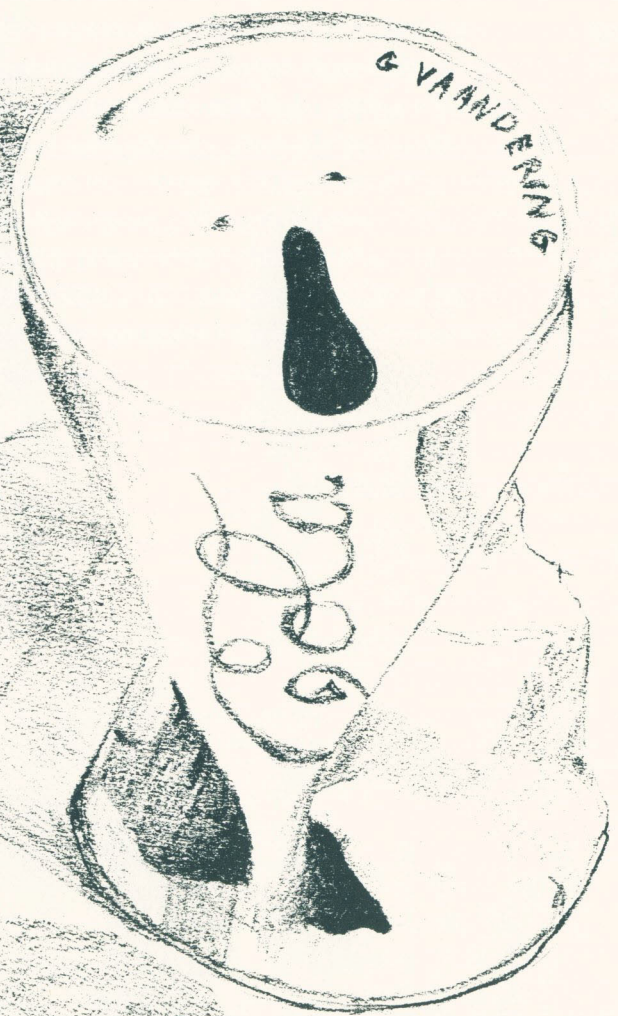
Crimson Bird
a crimson bird asked me
if i enjoyed the sun
i replied, with reddened skin, "no"
it shrugged its little shoulders
and flew off into the warm rays of life.

Norman Prenger





G. Vaandering



—Grace Holtvluwer

I take the first brave step and look up with a trembling, fearful smile at the sea of faces greeting me. Those hopeless moans . . . those dying eyes . . . those sick, flabby bodies . . . those unused, unregistering, deteriorating minds—they watch me. They watch me closely, hoping I will give them some attention. Yet, they are fearful. Perhaps they are more afraid of me than I am of them. I look down at my feet, and dart quickly into the building.

I know this is the men's wing. I am afraid. Who knows what young men with sick minds might do? I dash down the dingy hallway. As I pass them, they smile at me. Timidly. They blush faintly, as though ashamed for me to see their life-weary souls. It is the fear in my eyes that makes them blush. I am sure. I try to subdue it, but they know. They can tell. They have seen it in so many faces before.

VIOLENT WARD — A4B. The iron door is stained a sickly pink, and padlocked. I knock. The solid hinges are opened suddenly, making me jump. A hefty male nurse takes down my name. He looks at me curiously. The patients peek at me curiously from behind the door. It is not often one comes to Violent Ward, Third Floor.

I wonder when the last time was that they have seen an unstarched or tight-lipped, needle-armed female. A young female—young, like themselves.

Then I see him. Steve. The huge empty eyes crinkle into an ecstasy of joy. Oh! Such joy not seen in any living place. In a second it is gone. Something is awkward. We don't know whether to laugh or cry. Jerkily, we shake hands.

He seems like a stranger to me. His face is white. It is scarred with something, not visible. The hair is thick and greasy. The red beard is scraggly. The shirt and pants don't match. They don't fit the huge body right. A smell of stagnancy overwhelms me. There are no wrinkles, yet, like the others, there seems to be much age . . .

I tell him about the farm. Nothing I say can conceal the golden, golden summer sunshine, the laughter and the living of the outside world. I see in his eyes, reflected embers of the longing—heavy, intense longing. . .

My throat contracts. Still I smile and ask about his laundry job—remembering. . . A long time ago 180 pounds of thick red beard and muscle would come home from a logger's job. I remember the hard hat and the size twelve steel-toed boots. I remember washing a lunch box from which daily a huge lunch vanished. I remember the sweet, sweet smell of pine. How I had stood in awe of him then!

Steve ignores my question and asks, "How is Ken doing?"

"Ken is engaged now. He is taking over his father's farm. Soon they will be married."

"What about Mike, what is he doing? Did he say he might come and visit me?"

"I'm sure Mike will visit you—sometime. He has his B.A. now, and is working with the fisheries department, off the coast of Vancouver."



I see him wince. Suddenly he says to me quite cheerfully, "I have another doctor now, he says it might not be long now before I can get out. Maybe I can find a job on a farm somewhere."

It is time to go. I want to say more. He wants to say more. There is nothing to say.

He walks me to the door. Suddenly his huge white hospitalized arms are around me. He holds me tight, tight, and tighter. I feel the heaviness of his unexercised body. I hear his heart. I hear his dying mind, his soul crying—crying out to me. Oh, I want to fill him with my life blood, my spirit, my health, my youth. . . We stand so, binding, binding intensely, hurtfully, his past and future's empty years with my lived and yet un-lived years of fulfilled life.

He is my brother. There is awe between us.

I turn to go. Soon I am out of the putrid building, and free. I run. I run far—far from the bushes that conceal the sign "RIVERVIEW MENTAL HOSPITAL—Vancouver B.C."

Above the freeway, in tall grasses and bursting afternoon sun, the nausea hits me. Wave after wave of bitter, bitter hurt sheds itself into the grasses. The injustice, the damnable injustice explodes within my entire being, wracking my soul over and over again in broken hurt. And the pain. Sharp. Intense. It is so hard to breathe.

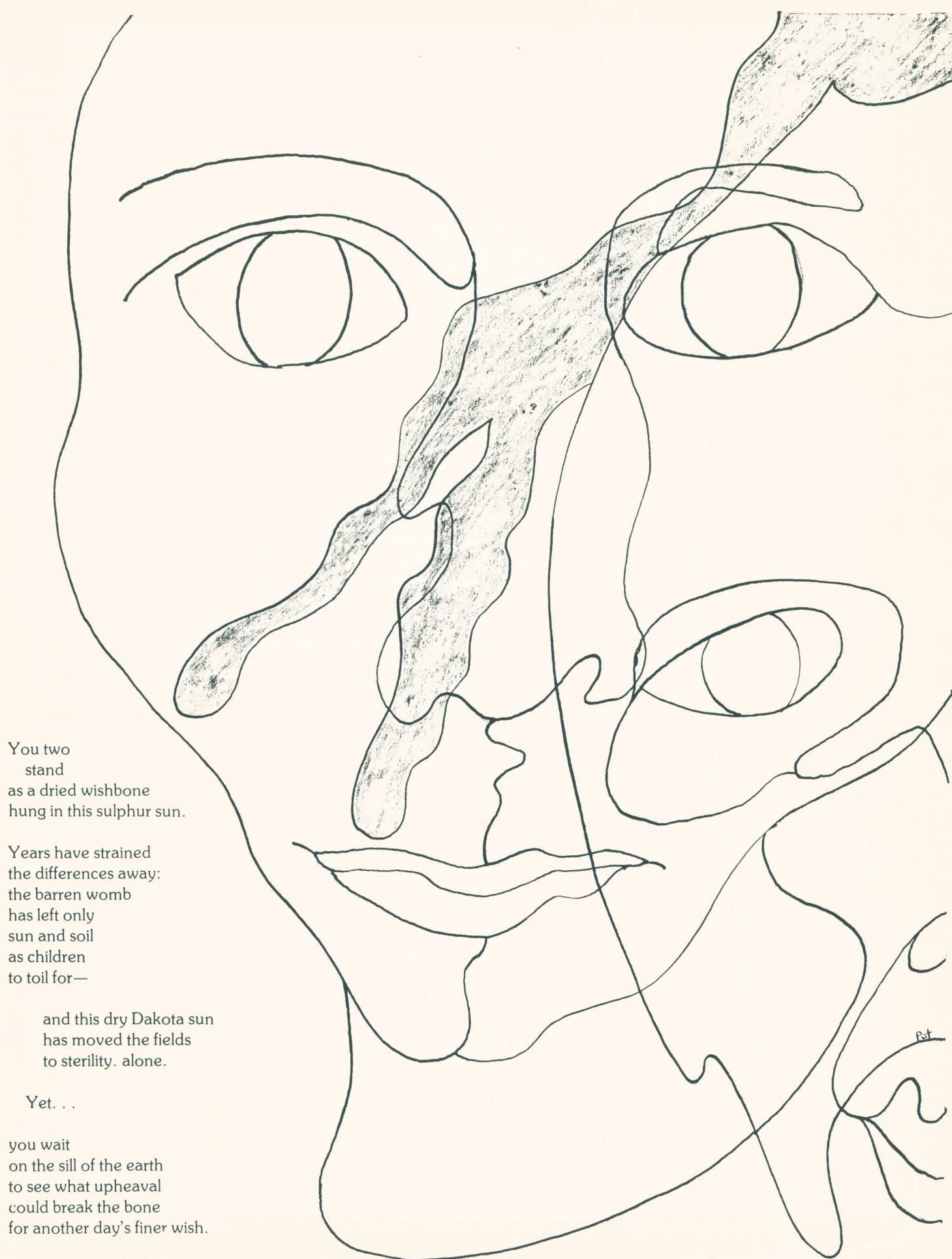
Finally I am calm, emptied of all emotion. I lay back and gaze at silent clouds drifting themselves into empty afternoon.

Then it hits me—the despair. Despair because nothing, nobody, can ever do anything about it.

. . . Never. . .



Judy Vander Kwaak



You two
stand
as a dried wishbone
hung in this sulphur sun.

Years have strained
the differences away:
the barren womb
has left only
sun and soil
as children
to toil for—

and this dry Dakota sun
has moved the fields
to sterility. alone.

Yet. . .

you wait
on the sill of the earth
to see what upheaval
could break the bone
for another day's finer wish.

Wounded

For months I had done chores on the farm, saving my allowance-money for the gun. Holding it in both hands, one calloused hand cradling the rifle reverently, the other lovingly caressing the varnished maple stock of the .22 Remington, bolt-action repeater. I was a nine-year-old boy, believing I was a man.

Crouched slightly, I stalked through the scrub-willow underbrush. Golden-brown poplar leaves crunched quietly underfoot. The only other sound was that of the autumn breeze, stirring the last reluctant leaves, then gently picking them, stem from branch, and drifting them slowly to the forest floor.

Suddenly a squirrel chattered, piercing the air with its rising, lunatical garble, sending suspenseful shivers of anticipation quivering up my spine, and sifting through the base of my scalp. My heart began to pound. Clammy hands clenching the rifle, my eyes darted from branch to spreading branch in the gnarled poplar tree before me.

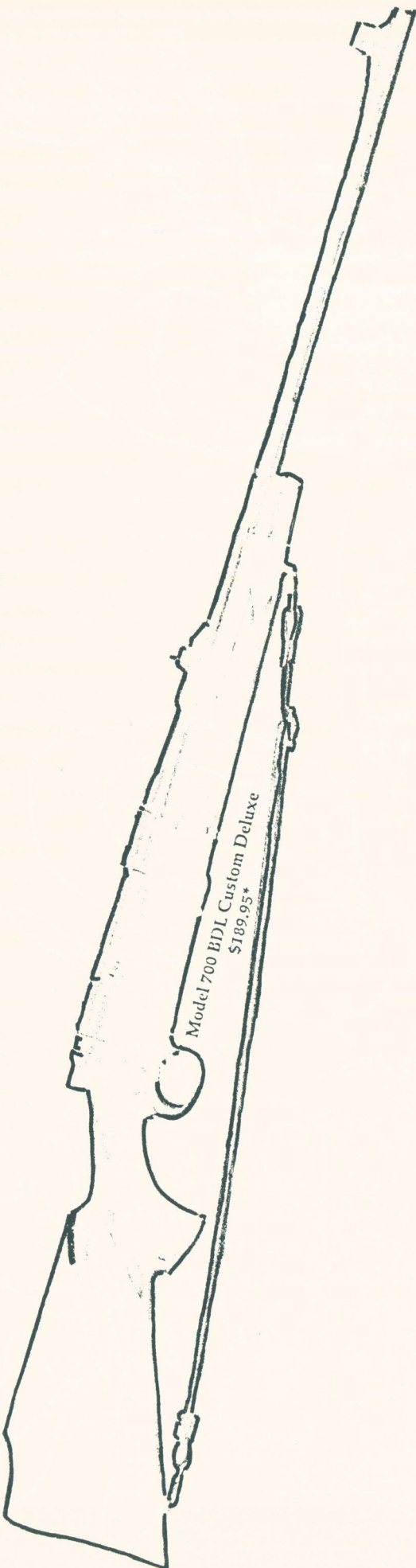
Then I saw it. It was perched on a branch midway up the tree, thin body bunched up on the branch, tail curled back behind it, its inquisitive head looking down at me. Fumbling hands working the bolt, I rammed a shell into the firing chamber, raised the rifle, shot, and missed. "Shit," I mumbled, "Use the sights." The squirrel, scolding all the while, scampered forward a few feet, then stopped. Awkwardly ejecting the spent shell, I clicked the bolt down, sliding another bullet into place. Raising the gun once again, I paused to sight, fired, then watched the squirrel jerk into motion, seeming to rise off the branch and hang for a moment, then plunge down, legs spread out, exposing the soft, gray fur of its belly.

A couple of times it crashed into branches on its way down, but each time, clawing at the slippery bark, it bounced off, until it thudded to the ground. There it lay, twitching in the dry leaves, slowly staining them crimson-red as its life-blood seeped away.

I was stunned. A numbness started in the pit of my stomach, then rose to my throat, and with it, tears rushed to my eyes. Still the squirrel lay there, twitching. "Die, please die," I cried, levering another bullet into place. Clenching my teeth, tears streaming down my cheeks, I poked the barrel at the writhing body, boring a merciful hole through its skull. It gave a final twitch. Then all was silent, deathly silent.

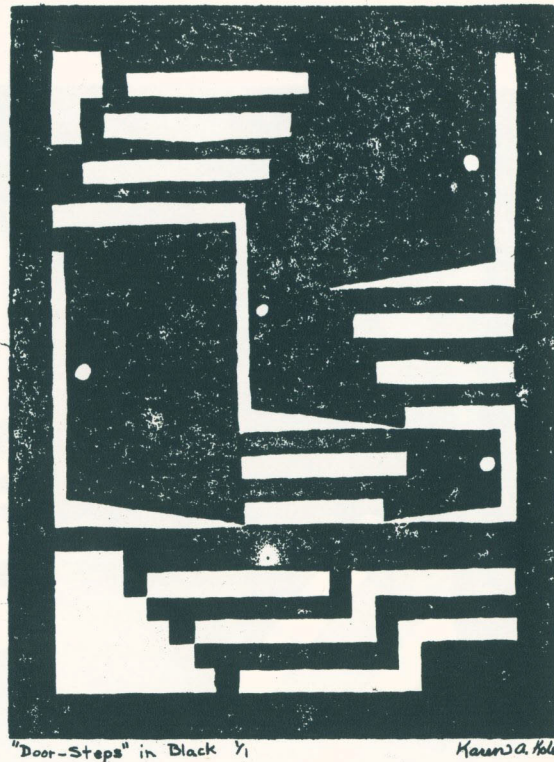
Frantically looking about, I picked up the crumpled corpse and flung it as far into the bush as I could. Then I ran, clawing my way through the underbrush, willows whipping my face; I drove myself on until exhaustion held me to a walk.

The dry, brown leaves crackled harshly underfoot, as I retraced my steps to the farm. A month later I started saving my allowance-money for a camera.









"What is Auntie Margaret cooking up today?"
(I just keep on stirring and pretend they've gone away.)

"Auntie Margaret, perhaps it's homemade soup?"
(They're half afraid of me, otherwise they'd come and snoop.)

"Oh Auntie, what did you find in the woods to fill your wicker basket?"
(They think I've collected baby toads and bat wings, well I wish they'd come out and ask that.)

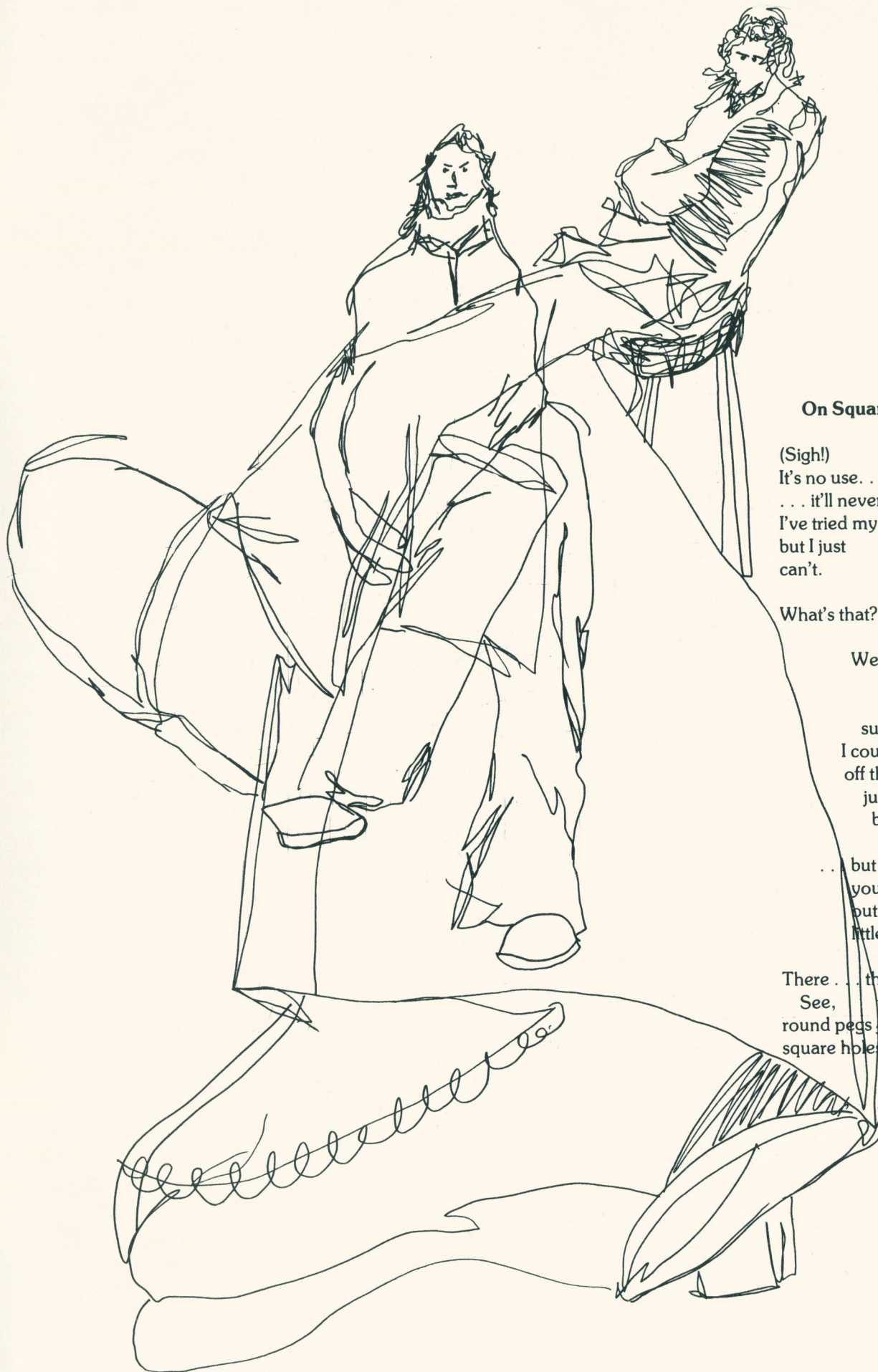
"Now my dear niece and nephew, since you really want to know; I will tell you what a spinster does whose wits are dim and slow.

Look in the kettle and you will see my recipe for dyeing, naturally. It's gentle and it's quick, I wish you'd help me dye. I'm sure you'll never want to stop after you first try."

NATURAL DYES: COLOR TESTED BY AUNT MARGARET

pickle juice	- bright yellow
red cabbage	- pale blues to lavenders
red onions	- husks only, dyes rust shades
spinach	- off-white green
yellow onions	- husks only giving bright yellow
blackberries	- berries dye deep purple turning forest green with soda
blueberries	- blues, grays, and lavenders
salmon berries	- pale beige
dandelions	- light yellows
marigolds	- grennish yellows
roses	- rich red, rose hips dye a warmer brown
curry	- rich yellow oranges
paprika	- creamy off-white
tumeric	- strong gold and yellow, becomes rust gold by adding soda
coffee	- light beige to coffee color, also save the grounds to reuse as a dye





On Squaring A Circle

(Sigh!)
It's no use. . .
. . . it'll never work.
I've tried my best
but I just
can't.

What's that?

Well, yeah

I
suppose
I could round
off the edges
just a
bit. . .

. . . but say, can't
you straighten
out just a wee
little bit too?

There . . . that's better.
See,
round pegs do fit into
square holes. . .

. . . sort of . . .

Asaph Hartz

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EDITORS

Bonnie Kuipers
Pat Leegwater

STAFF

Gerry Vaandering Judy Van Gorp
Margariete Timmermans
Dianne Vander Hoek Faye Meyers
Pauline Van Biert
Marj De Bruyn Phil Weaver
Ann Voogd

ADVISOR

Mike Stair

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